

Hunting Rules & Regs

Regulations in this section apply to both private and public lands statewide, unless otherwise specified.

Licenses and permits are required for hunting in South Carolina. Detailed information on the types of licenses and permits is located in the License Fees chapter of this book. All residents and nonresidents born after June 30, 1979, must successfully complete a hunter education course that is approved by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) before a hunting license can be obtained.

Basic Information on Hunting:

Hunting is defined as trying to find, seek, obtain, pursue, or diligently search for game.

Game Zones & WMAs - South Carolina is divided into eleven game zones, as defined on the map below.

DNR sets and regulates the methods of harvest, bag limits and other requirements for hunting on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and for deer on private lands within game zones 1, 2 and 4. This area encompasses the upstate counties and includes the Mountain, Central and Western Piedmont hunt units.

The SC General Assembly establishes seasons, limits and methods for private land in all of the other game zones (3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11), which encompass the midlands and lower coastal counties. DNR regulates WMA lands within these counties and is responsible for law enforcement statewide.

Protected Game - The following species may be hunted ONLY during legally established seasons: bear, beaver, bobcat, deer, fox, mink, muskrat, opossum, otter, rabbit, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel, waterfowl (goose, brant and duck), bobwhite quail, mourning dove, rails (marsh hen), coot, gallinule, ruffed grouse, crow, wild turkey, common snipe and woodcock.

Protected Nongame - The following species are protected and may not be hunted, molested, caught, transported, sold or possessed in any manner: Alligators, birds of prey (eagles, hawks, osprey, owls, kites and vultures), nongame birds (except English sparrows, pigeons and starlings) and cougars (also known as pumas or mountain lions).

Falconers must possess a SCDNR permit.

The importation or sale of live wolves is prohibited in South Carolina, except for exhibition or scientific purposes upon the approval of SCDNR as provided by regulations. It is unlawful to import coyotes. The sale of coyotes is allowed only by permit from SCDNR (50-11-2630). A person may not have a live wolf in his possession without a SCDNR permit.

Alligators - It is unlawful to feed or entice an American alligator with food (50-11-750).

Alligators may only be taken and/or possessed under authority of a permit issued by SCDNR. Such permits are issued to participants in the Private Lands Alligator Management Program and under the Nuisance or Emergency Alligator Management Program. For information about the program and licensing requirements for taking, possession and sale of alligators or their products call (803) 734-3938.

Armadillos are not a protected species, however, a hunting license is required to hunt armadillos. Harvesting armadillos on WMA lands is limited to the current open season and weapons that are in effect for game species on the WMA.

Bear - It is unlawful to buy, sell, barter or exchange a bear or bear part. Transportation of a freshly killed bear or bear parts is unlawful except during bear season. Any person violating these offenses must be fined not more than \$2500 or imprisoned for not more than 2 years, or both,

and hunting and fishing privileges must be suspended for 3 years. It is unlawful to feed bears or to hunt bears by the aid of bait (50-11-430, 50-11-440, 50-1-130).

All harvested bear must be reported to the SCDNR Clemson office or 864-654-1671, ext. 19 within 24 hours of harvest.

Participants in party dog hunts for bear must register before Sept. 15 with SCDNR. 25 members maximum per party. Write: SCDNR, 153 Hopewell Rd., Pendleton, SC 29670.

Crows - A hunting license and free Migratory Bird (HIP) Permit are required to hunt crows. Crows are migratory birds and as such,

are a federally protected species. The season is based on criteria established by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The open season for crows on private lands in South Carolina is November 1 - March 1, there is no bag limit. During the open season on private lands crows may be taken with any firearm, bow and arrow, or by falconry. Crow hunting on WMA lands is permitted. During the open season for small game hunting on WMAs, crows may only be hunted with weapons legal for small game. In Game Zone 1 no buckshot or rifles greater than .22 rimfire may be used except during deer and bear season (50-11-380). The use of electronic calls for crow hunting is permitted statewide on private land and WMA land. Crows damaging crops may be taken at any time without a federal permit (50 CFR 21.43).

Deer - Legal hunting time for deer is the time between one hour before official sunrise until one hour after official sunset (50-11-710).

It is unlawful to hunt, shoot or in any way kill deer from a motorboat, raft or any other water conveyance, or to molest deer while any part of the deer is in water.

Possessing any deer with the head detached while in transit from the point of kill is prohibited.

It is unlawful to hunt deer within 300 yards of a residence without permission of the owner or occupant, except that a landowner may hunt on his own land.

Archery, muzzleloaders and crossbows are allowed during gun hunts.

Antlerless Deer - An antlerless deer is defined as a deer with no antlers or an antlered deer with less than two inches of antler visible above the hairline (50-11-410).

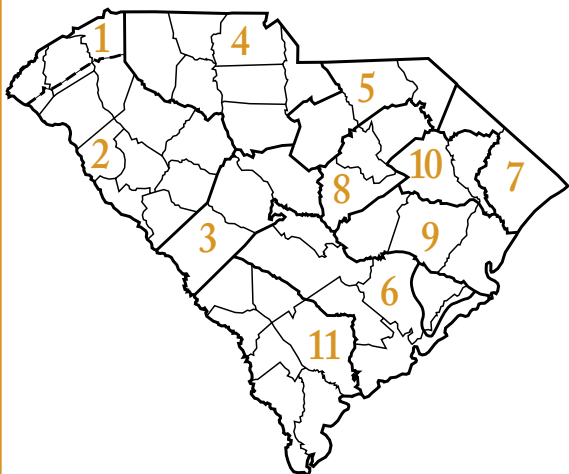
Antlerless deer may not be possessed, hunted, shot or in any way killed except during special seasons or by special permit.

Antlerless Deer Harvest Programs are conducted statewide using either-sex days and 2 optional antlerless deer tag programs. The dates for either-sex days are shown in the hunting season section beginning on page 40.

Optional antlerless deer tag programs that hunters may choose to participate in include the **Individual Antlerless Deer Tag Program** and the **Antlerless Deer Quota Program (ADQP)**. Both programs are in effect statewide (50-11-390).

With the **Individual Antlerless Deer Tag Program** hunters can purchase either 2 or 4 tags per person, for \$5 each, which can be used on any day open to deer hunting with the following Game Zone restrictions: **Game Zone 1, 2, & 4** (Mountains and Central and Western Piedmont); tags are valid on public or private land starting Oct. 1. Utilization is limited to

South Carolina Game Zones



2 tags per person only in **Game Zone 1. Game Zones 3 & 5-11** (Coastal Plain); tags are valid on private lands only starting Sept. 15. Tags are also valid on Sand Hills State Forest WMA in Chesterfield Co. and North Dike WMA in Berkeley Co. during any open season for deer starting Sept. 15. Tags do not have to be used on scheduled either sex days. Tags are not valid on properties enrolled in the Antlerless Deer Quota Program. Tags do not alter the daily or seasonal bag limits prescribed for Game Zones.

All persons purchasing tags in past years will be sent a renewal notice in May. New applicants may complete the application provided on page 51 or contact DNR Deer Project at 803-734-3886 to receive an application. The possession and use of these tags are limited to the purchaser.

Antlerless Deer Quota Program - Antlerless deer quotas are issued to qualifying land owners or lessees statewide who complete and submit an application along with a \$50 fee prior to July 15, each year. This program is generally better suited for landowners or lessees with larger acreages. Under the ADQP, a quota of tags is issued for a particular tract of land based on criteria including; density of the local deer population, condition of the local deer population, the size of the tract of land, and the recreational and agricultural objectives of the property owner.

Utilization of tags issued under the ADQP are subject to the following Game Zone restrictions. Game Zone 1 (mountains) tags are valid beginning Oct. 1. Game Zones 2 & 4 (central & western piedmont) and Game Zones 3 & 5-11 (coastal plain) beginning Sept. 15. Tags issued for a particular tract of land can only be used on that tract and they must be used on all antlerless deer that are harvested including antlerless deer harvested on either-sex days or by bow and arrow in Game Zones 1, 2, 4 & 5. Tags do not alter the daily or seasonal bag limits in Game Zones 1, 2, & 4. A harvest report must be completed by the applicant at the close of the season.

Feral Hogs and Coyotes - A hunting license is required to hunt feral hogs and coyotes. Coyotes may be hunted at night only as prescribed in the "Night Hunting" section on the following page. Hogs may not be hunted at night. There is no closed season or weapons restrictions for hunting feral hogs and coyotes on private lands statewide with the following exceptions; in Game Zone 1 during turkey season, hogs may only be taken with weapons legal for turkey. In Game Zone 1 it is unlawful to have in possession any firearm loaded with buckshot or larger shot or a rifle or ammunition greater than .22 rimfire except during deer and bear season (50-11-380). Feral hog and coyote hunting on WMA lands is permitted during any open season for game unless otherwise restricted. (See individual WMAs). On WMA lands, weapons used to hunt hogs and coyotes are limited to the weapon(s) that are allowed for the current open season on the WMA - see WMA seasons listing in the Game Zones sections beginning on page 40. No Sunday hunting on WMA lands. The

use of electronic calls for feral hog and coyote hunting is permitted statewide on private and WMA lands. Dog hunting for feral hogs and coyotes is allowed year-round on private lands statewide. Deer may not be hunted with dogs on any WMA lands in Game Zones 1, 2, and 4. On WMA lands in Game Zones 1, 2 and 4 feral hogs and coyotes may not be hunted with dogs during still gun hunts for deer. The possession or transport of live coyotes is allowed only by permit from SCDNR. No hogs may be taken live from any WMA in the state.

Importation & Possession - It is unlawful to import, possess or transport for the purpose of release or to introduce or bring into this state any live wildlife of the following types without a permit from the department: a member of the family Cervidae (deer, moose, elk, etc.), coyote, bear, turkey, furbearers (fox, raccoon, opossum, muskrat, mink, skunk, otter, bobcat, weasel and beaver), a nondomestic member of the families Suidae or Tayassuidae (pigs), Bovidae (bison, mountain goat, mountainsheep). 50-16-20

Note: DNR does not advocate or encourage keeping wildlife in captivity.

Turkey - Season dates: Game Zones 6 & 11, private land only, March 15-May 1. Game Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, & 10 and selected Wildlife Management Areas, April 1-May 1. Turkey tags and brochures containing regulations, season dates and limits available in March through DNR offices and Big Game Check Stations only. Must present hunting license and big game permit to receive tags.

Small Game - Small game includes the following species: quail, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, fox, beaver, bobcat, mink, muskrat, otter, skunk, grouse and weasel. Unless otherwise specified in the small game seasons charts, hunt dates for these species are from Thanksgiving day through March 1.

Migratory Birds - Migratory birds include: mourning dove, marsh hens, rails, woodcock, common snipe, common moorhens, purple gallinules, ducks, mergansers, sea ducks, coots, blue & snow geese, brant, Canada geese and crows.

Effective July 1, 1998, anyone over 16 or all licensed hunters hunting migratory game birds in the United States must have a HIP permit and complete a short questionnaire before hunting. Free permits are available at license vendors.

Seasons, shooting hours, limits, and other special restrictions on migratory bird hunting are set by SCDNR in accordance with guidelines set by the U S Fish & Wildlife Service. Detailed information on the seasons and restrictions is provided in a separate Migratory Bird Brochure available in September.

Listed below are frequently requested rules for hunting migratory birds.

- Shotguns must be plugged so as to hold no more than 3 shells.
- Baiting is strictly prohibited.
- All hunting hours end at official sunset.
- The possession of lead shot is prohibited

while waterfowl hunting.

- State and Federal Waterfowl stamps are required for hunting ducks, geese, coots and gallinules. (See exceptions in License section on page 11)

Refer to the Migratory Bird Brochure for complete information on particular species and other restrictions.

Bird Dog Training - Bird dogs may be trained year-round on private land. Trainers must have a valid hunting license and may only use firearms with blank ammunition during the closed season for quail. A Bird Dog Trainer's License is available to persons engaged in the business of training bird dogs in return for money, goods or services. This license allows a trainer and two assistants to take pen-raised quail during the closed season while training dogs. Applicants must provide documentation of land areas to be used for training. For information, or to obtain a license, contact SCDNR Small Game Project at P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202 or call 803-734-3609.

Calls, recorded or electronically amplified - It is illegal to hunt, catch, take, kill or attempt to hunt, catch, take or kill any game bird or game animal with the aid of recorded calls or sounds or recorded or electronically amplified imitations of calls or sounds. Crows, coyotes or hogs are not game birds/animals and therefore can be hunted using electronic calls during daylight hours on private lands and WMA lands.

Crossbows - Crossbows, blow guns, dart guns or drugged arrows are prohibited on WMAs except as provided in WMA Regs, Weapons 3.2 on page 32. Crossbows may be used on private lands and WMA lands statewide during firearms and muzzleloader season only for deer and bear. Any person 62 years of age or older may use a crossbow to hunt during seasons when the use of archery & muzzleloaders are authorized for hunting. Crossbows are also legal for use statewide during any open season for deer (including archery only seasons), turkey, or bear by a person who suffers from an upper limb disability, provided the person while hunting, has in immediate possession a written statement certifying the disability. The statement, based on a physical examination by the certifying neurologist, orthopedist, or rheumatologist shall describe the disability and shall state the person is not capable of operating archery equipment or a bow and arrow. A copy of the statement must be provided to the department prior to hunting with a crossbow. Mail doctor's statements to: SCDNR, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202. (50-11-565)

Deer Processors - It is unlawful to keep any deer in cold storage or refrigerating plants unless the carcass is clearly marked with the hunter's name, address, and hunting license number (50-11-1700). This does not apply to storage at a private residence or to deer that have an Individual Antlerless Deer Tag Program tag attached to the hamstring since the hunters name, address, and tag number appears on the face of the tag. Deer

processors should recognize that it is unlawful to sell deer meat to regain the processing fee for deer that have not been picked-up by the owner (50-11-1910). The best practice is to take a deposit for the processing service when deer are left at the facility. If meat is not picked-up by the owner it can be given to another individual at no charge.

Field Trials - It is unlawful to conduct or participate in any field trial unless a permit for such trial has been obtained from SCDNR. Requests for field trial permits must be submitted to SCDNR at least 14 days prior to the proposed trial date. Requests shall include payment of \$5 per trial and the time and location of the proposed trial. A charter or document indicating that the trial is sanctioned by a nationally recognized field trial organization must accompany all requests for field trial permits. For information, or to obtain a permit, contact SCDNR Small Game Project at P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202 or call 803-734-3609.

Hunting from Public Roads - It is unlawful to hunt from a public road unless the hunter has permission to hunt the adjacent property. Hunting as used in this section includes possessing, carrying, or having readily accessible, a loaded centerfire rifle, or a shotgun loaded with shot size larger than number four. Loaded means a weapon within which any ammunition is contained. This does not include weapons contained in a closed compartment, closed vehicle trunk, or a vehicle traveling on a public road. A person convicted of unlawful road hunting forfeits hunting privileges for one year. See **WMA Regulations Page 32** for restrictions on WMA lands.

Negligent Hunting - It is unlawful to use a firearm or archery tackle while in preparation for, engaged in the act of, or returning from hunting in a criminally negligent manner. Criminal negligence is defined as the reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Night - Night is defined as that period of time between one hour after official sunset of a day and one hour before official sunrise of the following day. (50-11-710)

Night Hunting - Night hunting is unlawful except that raccoons, opossums, foxes, mink, coyotes and skunk may be hunted at night; however, they may not be hunted with artificial lights except when treed or cornered with dogs. No buckshot or any shot larger than a No. 4, or any ammunition larger than 22 rimfire may be used. It is unlawful to use artificial lights at night, except vehicle headlights, while traveling in a normal manner on a public road or highway, while in possession of or with immediate access to both ammunition of a type prohibited for use at night and a firearm capable of firing the ammunition. (50-11-710). Rabbit hunting at night without weapons is lawful on private land.

Rabbit Boxes - It is unlawful for any person to trap rabbits, except that a landlord or tenant may use not more than five rabbit boxes on lands on which he has exclusive control during the gun season for rabbits. A hunting license is required

to use rabbit boxes. Rabbit boxes are not permitted on WMA lands (50-11-160).

Running Seasons (No gun season) - During any period when rabbits, raccoons, opossums or fox may be hunted without firearms, it is illegal to hunt such game when carrying on ones person or in ones vehicle any firearm.

Shining - The use of artificial lights from any vehicle or water conveyance for the purpose of observing or harassing wildlife is unlawful after 11 p.m. Shining is unlawful at any time in Game Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10. (50-11-700)

Selling Game Animals - It is unlawful to sell, except by special permit, any protected wildlife. Furbearing animals may be sold with a valid commercial fur harvest license. Contact DNR for a copy of the commercial fur harvest regulations.

Sunday Hunting - Hunting is prohibited on Sundays on all WMA lands. On private lands statewide Sunday hunting for all game is legal except bear hunting which is prohibited on Sundays in Game Zone 1.

Transporting Firearms - There are no SCDNR restrictions on transporting firearms by licensed hunters and fishermen in a vehicle to and from the place of hunting and fishing except on WMA lands. For regulations on WMA lands see Weapons 3.4 on page 32.

Trapping - Regulations are available in a separate brochure.

Trespass - It shall be unlawful to enter upon the lands of another for the purpose of hunting, fishing, trapping or retrieval of dogs without the consent of the landowner or manager.

Rifle Ranges

SCDNR operates two rifle ranges that are open for use during certain hours which are subject to change according to time of year, hunting seasons, etc. To confirm hours of operation, call the SCDNR Clemson office at 654-1671 ext. 18.

Pickens County Range - From Easley, take SC Hwy. 8 approximately 4 miles towards Pickens. Turn left on Breazeale Road. Drive ½ mile beyond SC Dept. of Transportation Maintenance Shop and turn left on Porter Rd. Go approximately ½ mile, turn left at the red gate. The range is located at the end of the gravel road.

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 9 am - 5 pm (EST) and 10 am - 6 pm (DST) Closed Sunday and Monday.

Spartanburg County Range - From Pauline, take SC Hwy. 215 approximately ½ mile east toward Glenn Springs. Turn left on Foster Mill Road and drive 2.5 miles (paved road becomes gravel road). Range is on the left side of the road.

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday: 9 am - 5 pm EST and 10 am - 6 pm DST. Closed Sunday and Monday.

Manchester State Forest Rifle Range: (SC Forestry Commission, Sumter County) Open Saturday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Sunday 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm. \$5.00 per day or \$25.00 per year. Hearing protection required. For more info call 803-494-8196.

US Forest Service Rifle Ranges

Cedar Creek Rifle Range (Oconee Co.) Year round. Fully accessible to disabled visitors. Three of five shooting tables are under a shelter. For more info call 864-638-9568 or FAX 864-638-2659.

Candy Branch Rifle Range (Abbeville Co.) Year round, sunrise to sunset. Five firing lines with left or right benches including one accessible to disabled visitors. For more info call 803-637-5396 or Fax 803-637-2273.

Beaverdam Rifle Range (Edgefield Co.) Year round, sunrise to sunset. Eight open firing lines with left or right benches. For more info call 803-637-5396 or Fax 803-637-2273.

Fairforest Rifle Range (Union Co.), **Leeds Rifle Range** (Chester Co.), **Philson Crossroads Rifle Range** (Laurens Co.), **Indian Creek Rifle Range** (Newberry Co.) Year round, day use. All have six firing lanes, left and right benches are available, including one bench accessible to disabled visitors (except Leeds Rifle Range). For more info call 864-427-9858 or Fax 864-427-3529.

Francis Marion Rifle Ranges: Year round, daylight hours only. Shooting tables, including one fully-accessible to disabled visitors. For more info call Wambaw District at 843-887-3257 or Fax 843-887-3848 or Witherbee District at 843-336-3248 or Fax 843-336-4789.

WMA Abuse

Any person who damages, destroys or misuses WMA lands or improvements on them including, but not limited to roads, vegetation, buildings, structures or fences, or leaves refuse, trash or other debris on the property, or sets, makes or builds a fire (except in an area specially designated as a campfire area), operates a motor conveyance on areas or roads closed to operation, target practices, camps in areas except for designated campsites, disregards safety or restrictive postings as designated by the landowner or who otherwise abuses, damages, destroys or misuses wildlife management areas is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined \$200 and be required to make restitution to the landowner in an amount determined by the court to be necessary to repair, rebuild, restore or clean up the property to its condition before the abuse occurred. A person who is convicted of damaging, destroying, abusing or misusing Wildlife Management Area land twice in a three-year period shall lose the privilege of entering WMA land for one year (50-11-2210).

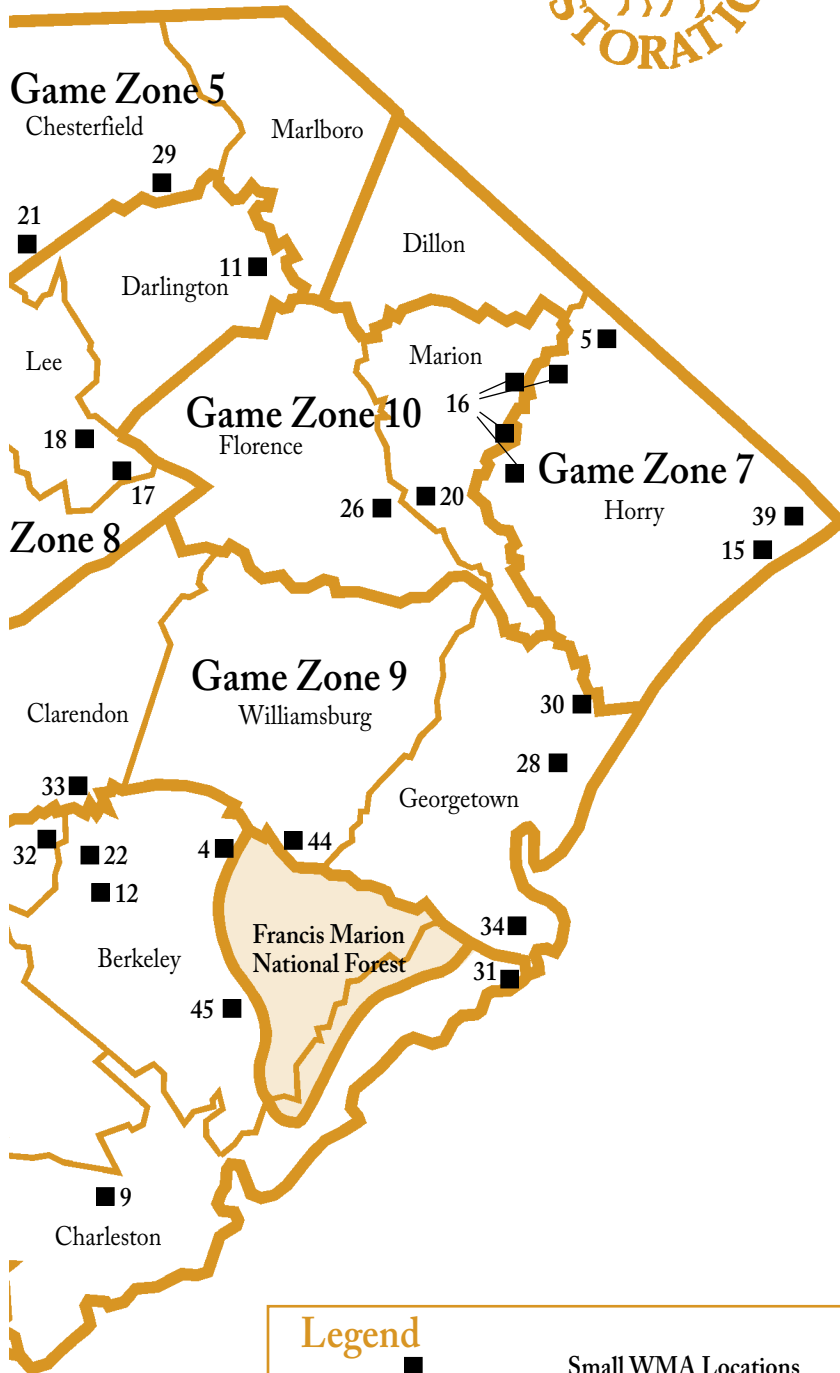
Turkey Hunting regulations and seasons on private and WMA lands are published in the Turkey brochure available in March.

Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Hunting regulations and seasons are published in the Migratory Bird brochure in mid-September.

Mountain Hunt Unit

Central Piedmont Hunt Unit





Wildlife Management Areas

- 1) Aiken Gopher Tortoise HP WMA
- 2) Bear Island WMA
- 4) Canal WMA
- 5) Cartwheel Bay HP WMA
- 6) Crackerneck WMA
- 7) Draper WMA
- 8) Donnelley WMA
- 9) Dungannon HP WMA
- 10) Fant's Grove WMA
- 11) Great Pee Dee HP WMA
- 12) Hatchery WMA
- 13) Hickory Top WMA
- 14) Keowee WMA
- 15) Lewis Ocean Bay HP WMA
- 16) Little Pee Dee River HP Complex including: Little Pee Dee River HP, Tilghman HP, Dargan HP, Ward HP, Upper Gunter's Island and Huggins Tract
- 17) Longleaf Pine HP WMA
- 18) Lynchburg Savannah HP-WMA
- 19) Manchester State Forest WMA
- 20) Marsh Furniture WMA
- 21) McBee WMA
- 22) Moultrie WMA including: Bluefield and Greenfield WMAs, Hall and Porcher WMAs, & North Dike WMA
- 23) Oak Lea WMA
- 24) Palachucola WMA
- 25) Parr Hydroelectric Project including: Broad River WMA, Parr Reservoir WMA, Monticello Reservoir WMA
- 26) Pee Dee Station Site WMA
- 27) Rock Hill Blackjacks HP WMA
- 28) Samworth WMA
- 29) Sand Hills State Forest WMA
- 30) Sandy Island WMA
- 31) Santee Coastal Reserve WMA
- 32) Santee Cooper WMA
- 33) Santee Dam WMA
- 34) Santee-Delta WMA
- 35) St. Helena Sound HP WMA: Otter, Ashe, Beet, Warren, Big & South Williman Is.
- 36) Tillman Sand Ridge HP WMA
- 37) Turtle Island WMA
- 38) Victoria Bluff HP WMA
- 39) Waccamaw River HP WMA
- 40) Webb WMA
- 41) Edisto River WMA
- 42) Stumphouse WMA
- 43) Worth Mountain WMA
- 44) Wee Tee
- 45) Bonneau Ferry
- 46) Glassy Mountain Archery Only Area

Legend



Small WMA Locations

Game Zone Boundaries

Hunt Unit Boundaries

WMA properties should be marked with these yellow and black signs.



A chart showing the acreage, county of location, telephone contact number, and hunting opportunities available for certain species is located on page 36.

A vast amount of WMA lands are located in the Mountain, Central and Western Piedmont Hunt Units. The areas on this map show the approximate locations for the major Wildlife Management Areas in South Carolina. For detailed maps showing all WMAs contact your local DNR Wildlife Management Office (see page 58) or write: WMA MAPS, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC, 29202 (803)734-3886. Request by county of interest.